

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 01095 251200Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 EB-08
COME-00 DOE-15 SOE-02 /131 W
-----112421 252045Z /20

R 250817Z MAY 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6233
INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1095

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, IZ, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET-IRAQI RELATIONS

REF: BAGHDAD 993 (NOTAL)

1. ROUMANIAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR NEACSU, A VERY
COMPETENT DIPLOMAT WITH OVER FIVE YEARS SERVICE IN BAGHDAD,
TELLS US THAT IRAQI-SOVIET RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY VERY TENSE.
HE REFERRED TO RECENT PUBLIC AIRING OF DISPUTES OVER
POSITIONS TAKEN BY COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRAQ (REFTEL) AND SAID
THAT ARTICLE IN BAATH PARTY NEWSPAPER CRITICAL OF IRAQI
COMMUNIST PARTY WAS INSTIGATED BY SADAAM HUSSEIN AND
WRITTEN BY HIS CLOSE COLLABORATOR, RCC MEMBER TARIQ AZIZ.
FOLLOWING APPEARANCE OF THE CRITIQUE, SOVEIT AMBASSADOR
BARKOVSKY DEMANDED MEETING WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN, WHO STOOD
BY THE CRITICAL COMMENTS IN PARTY NEWSPAPER. REPORTEDLY,
HUSSEIN WAS ESPECIALLY INCENSED BY EVIDENCE THAT LOCAL
COMMUNISTS WERE FOLLOWING SOVIET INSTRUCTIONS DEVELOPED
AT RECENT CONFERENCE OF ARAB COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS
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IN SOFIA.

2. ANOTHER AND MORE PREVALENT STORY ON BARKOVKSY-HUSSEIN
MEETING HAS LATTER POINTING OUT THAT BARKOVKSY HAD COME TO
THE WRONG PLACE WITH HIS COMPLAINT. IRAQ HAS A FREE
PRESS, HUSSEIN SAID, AND BARKOVSKY WAS TOLD TO GO SEE THE
EDITORS. THIS REPLY REPORTEDLY LEFT SOVIET ENRAGED.

3. ROUMANIAN NOTED THAT BAATH LEADERSHIP HAS MOVED RECENTLY TO ERASE VESTIGES OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BOTH THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE ARMY. BAATH PARTY ORGANIZATION IN ARMY IS NOW IN THOROUGH CONTROL AT ALL LEVELS, DESPITE INITIAL RESISTANCE FROM SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS WHO WANTED MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT TO BE COMPLETELY APOLITICAL.

4. SOVIET AND CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA IS A MATTER OF CONCERN TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT, NEACSU BELIEVES, BUT IRAQIS FEEL UNABLE TO CONFRONT USSR ON THIS ISSUE. IN ADDITION TO MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP, WHICH IS A MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON IRAQIS, ROUMANIAN NOTED THAT SOVIETS REMAIN HEAVILY INVOLVED IN ECONOMIC SECTOR. HE BELIEVES THAT SOVIET INFLUENCE WILL REMAIN GREAT DESPITE CURRENT DISAGREEMENT.

5. NEACSU SAID THAT IRAQI UNHAPPINESS WITH CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA WAS MODIFIED SOMEWHAT BY IRAQI DESIRE TO OBTAIN CUBAN EXPERTISE IN GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. HE APPEARED TO CONFIRM REPORTS WE HAVE HEARD THAT CUBANS ARE (OR WILL BE) TRAINING UNITS OF THE IRAQI POPULAR ARMY BUT HE HAS BEEN UNABLE, DESPITE WHAT HE SAID WERE CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS ON HIS PART, TO DEVELOP ANY HARD INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF CUBAN PERSONNEL INVOLVED.

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5. COMMENT: ROUMANIAN DIPLOMATS IN BAGHDAD FEEL THAT THEIR POSITION IS SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO OUR OWN. THEY TAKE PRIDE IN HAVING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL AND PARTICIPATING IN A MEDIATORY FUNCTION IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY FEEL THAT THIS HAS HAD NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE IRAQIS. WHILE RESENTING SOVIET ROLE IN IRAQ, THEY TAKE SOME CONSOLATION FROM CURRENT DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN BAGHDAD AND MOSCOW.
PECK

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